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Modjadji leaders take govt to task

Alex Japho Matlala

A war of words is brewing between the Modjadji royal council, community members and the ANC-led government in Limpopo over the allocation of new vehicles and office buildings to senior traditional leaders.

Through its cooperative governance, human settlement and traditional affairs department, the province spends close to R1 billion each year to build houses and offices and supply new cars to senior traditional leaders.

Last year, the department spent R55 million to buy the first batch of more than 100 bakkies for senior traditional leaders. The second batch was handed over late last year to them.

Apparently the Modjadji royal family have been waiting to receive some of these perks, but they have gone to other leaders. This has since driven a wedge between the department and its people.

One angry resident, Leon Mateta penned a damning letter to Frans Mohlala at ANC headquarters, accusing the ruling party of sidelining the dynasty and its people.

"The Modjadji royal council consists of over 120 villages. Almost half of our villages have no drinkable water.

"Roads have turned into dongas, while thieves are ruling the streets at night because there is no electricity," said Mateta.

During a visit last year by the ANC Youth League in Limpopo, council leaders accused several MECs of not living up to their promises.

The council told league provincial chair Tonny Rachoene that the government promised to bring clean piped water to the council from boreholes, but it has not done so.

Council spokesperson Ronnie Moroatshehla confirmed the family had not received a vehicle.

Human settlements and traditional affairs MEC Basikopo Makamu said it was a lie that the department has forgotten the Modjadji royal council, its people and the royal family.

"I visited the council last year. The council identified a site to build new offices. Construction will be handled by the department of public works.

"As for the car, not all senior traditional leaders have received them yet. We buy them in batches."